

Washington, DC – U.S. Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez (TX-23) announced Friday that the Department of Veterans Affairs began accepting applications on Saturday, May 1st for the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship, which Congress passed and which was signed into law last year. The Fry scholarship expands the New GI Bill education benefits to cover the full cost of a college education for all of the children of service members who have died on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. “This legislation honors the sacrifice of our military families, who are truly the unsung heroes of our nation’s defense,” said Congressman Rodriguez. “The children whose moms or dads have given their life in military service to our nation deserve our support.”

All children of members of the Armed Forces who have died in the line of duty while on active duty on or after September 11, 2001, are eligible for 36 months of tuition and fees up to the maximum in-state tuition and as well as a monthly living stipend, and book allowance. The VA estimates 1,500 military children will be eligible for the Fry scholarship in 2010. The application process opened May 1, 2010.

The benefit took effect August 1, 2009, and VA must begin making payments no later than August 1, 2010 with retroactive payments for children enrolled in college from August 1, 2009 through July 31, 2010. Surviving military children have 15 years to use their benefits, beginning on their 18th birthdays.

For more information, visit the VA website at <http://www.gibill.va.gov> or call (888) GIBILL-1 (442-4551) This provision, authored by Rep. Chet Edwards, was enacted as part of the Supplemental Appropriations Act in 2009 in honor of Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry, 28, a Texas native who died in Iraq in 2006 while disarming an explosive. He is survived by three young children.

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